

Abstract 693

TITLE: Non-Traditional HIV/AIDS Prevention Interventions Targeting African American MSM
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ISSUE: There is a need for non-traditional education and outreach activities that are not readily identifiable as HIV/AIDS related in order to reach men who have sex with men who do not self identify as gay or bisexual. There was a need to evaluate the B-Boy Blues Festival, a non-traditional HIV/AIDS outreach initiative held in St. Louis by Blacks Assisting Blacks Against AIDS.

SETTING: The B-Boy Festival was held in St. Louis, Missouri. The intervention took place in one of the public parks in St. Louis frequented by the African American gay community. The target population for the festival was men who have sex with men that may or may not self-identify as gay or bisexual.

PROJECT: The B-Boy Blues Festival included a series of workshops designed to improve attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS, entertainment, cultural activities, HIV/AIDS testing, and the distribution of condoms and HIV/AIDS literature. The name of the festival was derived from B-Boy Blues, a novel by James Hardy, who has made several appearances. The project included an evaluation component designed to collect information about the attitude toward HIV/AIDS and knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

RESULTS: A survey instrument designed to collect information about the attitude toward HIV/AIDS and knowledge of HIV/AIDS was disseminated at the B-Boy Blues Festival's in 1996, 1997, and 1998. The festival attracted hundreds of young, gay, African American males. There were significant improvements in attitudes for six of the ten attitude questions. There were significant improvements in knowledge for eight of the 15 knowledge questions.

LESSONS LEARNED: Prevention outreach activities that involve the use of public parks as a setting for education designed to improve attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS can be effective. Findings suggest that funds should be made available to support nontraditional HIV/AIDS education and outreach initiatives that are not advertised or identified as an HIV/AIDS activity.

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